



INTERNATIONAL  
SECURITY  
AFFAIRS

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
2400 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-2400

29 June 2005

28 JUL 2005

In Reply Refer to:  
I-05/007618

The Honorable John R. Conyers, Jr.  
2138 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Conyers:

You wrote a letter to Secretary Rumsfeld requesting that he respond to a report in the *London Times* on Sunday, May 29, which suggested that British and U.S. aircraft increased their rates of bombing in 2002 in order to provoke war with Iraq, and that such actions indicate that the decision had been made by the summer of 2002 to go to war in Iraq. I am responding to your inquiry on the Secretary's behalf.

At a joint press conference on June 7, 2005, this subject was addressed by President Bush and Prime Minister Blair. In response to the suggestion that the President and the Prime Minister had already decided in the summer of 2002 to use military force to deal with Saddam Hussein, the President replied, "There's nothing farther from the truth." The Prime Minister said that he and the President were determined to give Saddam Hussein a final chance to comply with the requirements of a long series of UN Security Council resolutions. President Bush reiterated that he and Prime Minister Blair made the decision to resort to force only as a last option.

With regard to your specific questions on the actions taken by U.S. and British aircraft in 2002, such actions were in response to the Iraqi military firing on U.S. and British aircraft that were routinely patrolling the no-fly zones over Iraq. These patrols, and the pilots' response when threatened or under attack, were fully in accordance with UN Security Council Resolutions 678, 687, 688, and 949 and consistent with declared U.S. and U.K. policy toward Iraq.

Sincerely,

Peter W. Rodman

